

LIGHT CONVERSATION

Co-op looking for members
to serve, Pg. 5

The efficiency of space
heaters, Pg. 6



A newsletter for members of Tri-County Electric Cooperative

December 2014 Vol. 26 Issue 12

Manage power use

Simple steps to save on
energy used by home
entertainment systems

Director applications due next month

Ways to save money at local businesses



Elections results

So what do those words mean to your electric cooperative? In summary, they mean a lot, but primarily education. During the long political campaign process leading up to the November elections, your local electric cooperative used the important campaigning process to educate candidates about TEC and electric cooperatives.

As you know, during the campaign, candidates are very accessible and want to tell us all about themselves and why we should vote for them—which is great. But it's also a great opportunity to inform the candidates about electric cooperatives and the issues impacting our members. Therefore, if the incumbent is re-elected, we continue to build upon our relationship to educate and inform. Yet, if a challenging candidate is victorious, we've started the education step in our relationship and they already know a little about our member-owned electric cooperative.

I think it's important to note that TEC does not support any one political party. Rather, we support legislators and candidates that "support" electric cooperatives.

TEC hosts a local legislator forum and invites our area legislators to address cooperative issues for the upcoming legislative session. We also look forward to our 2015 state legislative conference in St. Paul that is held in conjunction with the Minnesota Rural Electric Association (MREA) Annual Meeting. In May, your cooperative will attend the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA) legislative conference where we will continue to educate, inform and strengthen our working relationships with our elected officials.

Your local electric cooperative is very much engaged in the state and federal legislative process, and our primary role is to inform and educate legislators on our local cooperative.

TEC has been very fortunate in that the constituents of southeastern Minnesota have continued to elect representatives that have been great supporters of electric cooperatives. Representative Gene Pelowski and Representative Greg Davids have also been recognized for their cooperative support from MREA as past legislators of the year.

OPERATION ROUND-UP

As we've begun the holiday season, having just celebrated Thanksgiving, I am humbled and so very appreciative of the support provided by the many members of Tri-County Electric Cooperative for their voluntary support of your cooperative's Operation Round-Up Program. By rounding up your monthly electric bill to the next dollar amount, the small change makes a big difference to the local food shelves, local non-profits, and so many special community projects.

Thank you to the Operation Round-Up Board of Directors: James Wieser, of Hokah, president; Tom Tibor, of Minnesota City, vice president; Annette Kiehne, of Harmony, secretary/treasurer; John Bronk, of Winona; Mary George, of Houston; Miriam Harstad, of Harmony; and Skip Hrejsa, of Brownsville. I would encourage all members of TEC to participate in this GREAT program. It's simple, easy and costs just a few cents a month to participate.

Have a safe and festive holiday season, and thanks for your continued support of your electric cooperative. As always, I welcome your calls, emails and personal visits.



Representatives Greg Davids and Gene Pelowski visited with board directors, staff and employees recently to learn more about how legislation effects the cooperative and in turn effects members.

Balancing supply and demand

New load management strategies benefit members

Dairyland Power Cooperative is TEC's wholesale power supplier, providing our cooperative with the electricity required to meet the needs of your homes, farms and businesses.

Traditionally, Dairyland's Load Management Program functioned to reduce energy consumption during periods of peak demand, mainly as a way to reliably meet energy needs while curbing costs. In essence, that original goal still stands: Load Management remains a tool used to balance the demand for electricity with the ability to generate or economically purchase electricity. Dairyland and its member cooperatives save money by deferring the need to construct additional power plants or purchase expensive power during periods of high demand.

CONTROLLING FOR CAPACITY AND ECONOMICS

In the past load control was enacted mostly during periods of extreme weather conditions locally. That has changed over the years due to MISO. Weather conditions elsewhere can signal load control locally. High market prices can also trigger load control.

The difference today is that Dairyland relies on load management resources for more than peak load reduction since joining the Midcontinent Independent System Operator (MISO) as a transmission-owning member in June 2010. Load Management is now also used as an economic tool to reduce wholesale energy costs, to the benefit of cooperative members.

Prior to joining MISO, Dairyland produced power

from its own generating facilities or purchased energy directly from a neighboring utility to provide the needed electricity for its member cooperatives. By joining MISO, Dairyland's generation resources are now offered into the wholesale energy market and are affected by the electricity used and produced across the region. All generation is dispatched into the MISO market for regional requirements, and sold to MISO based on market prices. Similarly, all of Dairyland's load requirements are purchased from MISO at market prices.

Dairyland now needs to plan differently and make changes in both operating its power plants and marketing the energy. Simply put, Dairyland cannot just dispatch power from, for example, its facility in Genoa, Wis., anymore to fulfill direct needs.

If the current or projected day-ahead market price to purchase energy is too high, Dairyland may now implement load control as a way to mitigate the need to buy high-priced power. A price threshold, on which to base the decision to implement load management or buy power in an inhospitable market, is set to ensure a reasonable number of control events each season.

LOAD MANAGEMENT AND WHY DO WE DO IT

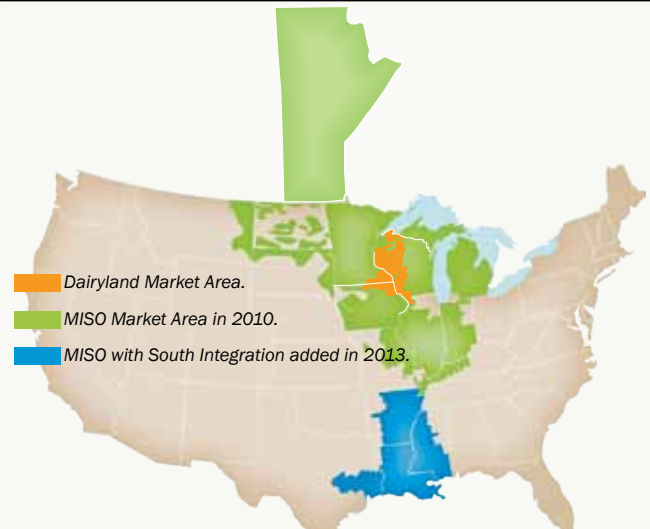
Load management based on economics is a tool used to reduce overall energy costs for Dairyland. It controls certain appliances (residential water heaters, air conditioners, interruptible heating systems, dairy water heaters) during one time of day, usually to be restored at a later time of day when energy prices are more favorable.

Because economic-based load control typically involves the shifting of energy use from one time frame to another, the value of that control event depends on hourly energy prices. System Operations staff take into consideration both the "avoided cost" of removing certain loads during the control period and the "incurred cost" of bringing the controlled appliances back on during the restoral period.

To ensure the Load Management program is doing its job most effectively, results of various control techniques are continually analyzed. Analysis of historical energy prices consistently indicates that control periods with the greatest opportunity for energy cost savings occur during the evening when hourly energy prices decline quickly. This period of economic control may include a few hours that are generally considered "off peak." Not unlike diversifying or spreading one's financial risk in the stock market, economic control is simply about shifting load from a less advantageous pricing period to one with an increased chance for gains.

Balancing, cont. on Page 11

Timeline for Full Load Control Signals



Prior to 2010: Dairyland based load control only on the power load in the Dairyland market area.

2010: The Board of Directors at Dairyland determined it in our best interest to integrate our generation resources with MISO. At that time and until 2012, Dairyland continued to send our distribution cooperative load control signals based only on the power load in the DPC market area.

2012: MISO revised its capacity structure to an annual capacity structure, under which we now submit annual forecasts. At that time it became financially beneficial for the distribution cooperative members of Dairyland to adopt a new method of load control referred to as "coincidence". Dairyland's board determined we should make this beneficial change to our load management program and load control practice. With this implementation of "coincidence" in our load management, we carefully monitor MISO's and Dairyland's load peaking history, time frames and weather factors to attempt to match Dairyland's peak load with MISO's on a daily basis.

2013: MISO integrated several southern states into their transmission network. Named the Southern Integration, our pool of shared generation resources increased by 38%, allowing our cooperative access to even greater reliability resources and financial efficiencies which are great for our budgets, convenience and peace of mind.



Saving energy on entertainment

Many homes boast TVs and sound systems that can rival any football stadium and many movie theaters. People can save hundreds of dollars a year by watching movies at home rather than going to the local theater. Luckily, there are simple steps to saving even more money if you manage the power consumption of your home entertainment system.

Many of the devices in your home entertainment system and your computer system use energy when

they are turned off. This is commonly called parasitic load or vampire load. According to Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory, the average home loses 8 percent of its monthly energy consumption to these energy vampires.

Your devices use power when turned off because the electronics inside the devices are still working. What these devices are doing and the amount of energy used when turned off varies. It could be that they are remembering the last channel that you viewed,

remembering the language you speak or trying to turn on faster. Devices such as TVs and DVD players will often have power settings in the setup menu. Try to find that menu and adjust the settings to save more power. Generally this will cause the device to take a few more seconds to start. Many manufacturers have power settings turned off by default.

Microwave ovens and alarm clocks, which use relatively small amounts of standby power, are acceptable to leave

In an average home, 5 percent to 8 percent of electric use stems from “energy vampires”— devices that use power even when turned off. Smart power strips help you unplug energy-draining devices when not in use easily. There are typically three different types of outlets on a smart strip:



The blue outlet serves as a control plug (ideal for a TV or computer).



Devices plugged into red outlets stay on—electricity to these receptacles never cuts off, making them perfect for satellite boxes and other items that need constant power.



Remaining outlets, often green or neutral in color, are sensitive to current flowing through the blue outlet. Turning off a device plugged into the blue outlet cuts power to items connected to these outlets.



Smart strips are available online or at specialty electronic retailers and generally cost \$20 or more depending on their size.

Source: Cooperative Research Network, Bits Ltd.

plugged in. A digital video recorder (DVR) uses a fairly significant amount of power when turned off, but if you record programs frequently, you will want to leave it plugged in too.

You don't have to worry about unplugging items with mechanical on/off switches, such as lamps, hair dryers or small kitchen appliances like toasters or mixers—they don't draw any power when turned off.

How do you slay other energy vampires? Try plugging household electronics like personal computers, monitors, printers, speakers, stereos, DVD and video game players and cell phone chargers into power strips. Not only do power strips protect sensitive electronic components from power surges, but you can quickly turn off several items at once.

Of course, using a power strip is a manual process and is an all-or-nothing option. A variation on the power strip is the "smart strip." Smart power strips allow you to plug devices into a specially marked section of the power strip so they will still have power when turned off. Other devices that can be turned off safely are plugged into the rest of the strip. This allows you to turn off parts of a home entertainment system, such as the stereo, DVD player or home theater audio system without losing the ability to record programs to a DVR or having to reprogram the television every time you want to watch a show.

Of course, there's always a catch. Some devices use standby power to make life more convenient. If you unplug your television or cable/satellite receiver box, what happens? When plugged back in, the TV or box usually will have to run its initial setup program. Depending on the particular device, it could take up to 20 minutes for channels to be recognized or for the user to reset preferences, which isn't something most people are willing to do every day. For these devices, look for

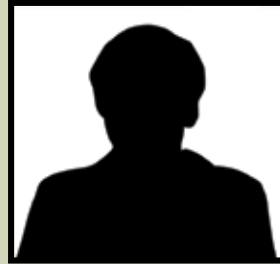
the Energy Star label.

The money saved by eliminating the energy vampires in your home may be enough to go out and see a movie. But it may still be not enough to afford that extra-large popcorn!

Brian Sloboda is a program manager specializing in energy efficiency for the

Cooperative Research Network, a service of the Arlington, Va.-based National Rural Electric Cooperative Association.

The Cooperative Research Network monitors, evaluates, and applies technologies that help electric cooperatives control costs, increase productivity, and enhance service to their consumers.



TEC is looking for a few good members

Members needed to serve on Nominating Committee and run for District 3 board seats

Now that election season is over, it is time to focus on a different election—TEC's 2015 district 3 board director seats. The cooperative is looking for members interested in getting involved.

NOMINATING COMMITTEE

This is a short-term commitment. The committee meets to review director candidate applications to determine which members' names are placed on the ballot. TEC needs three members from District 3 (Winona County) to review director applications for that district. If you are interested in serving on this committee, please call TEC at 1-800-432-2285 by December 12 and ask for Heather Larson or send an email to hlarson@tec.coop.

DIRECTORS SEATS

If you are a member living in District 3 (Winona County), you are eligible to run for the two seats up for election in April 2015. If you are interested in a director application, please call TEC at 1-800-432-2285 and ask for Heather Larson or send an email to hlarson@tec.coop. Deadline for applications is January 16.



The efficiency of space heaters

Space heaters are small, versatile, and generally good at warming a room, and at some point most people consider purchasing one. However, some manufacturers claim that their electric space heater can significantly cut a home's heating bill. Do these claims make sense?

Some basic facts about space heaters will help get at the truth of the matter. Space heaters work best as a supplement to a furnace or heat pump—they are rarely used as the primary heating source. Three main types of space heaters are available, which can usually be bought for \$30 to \$100: radiant heaters, convection heaters and combination heaters.

RADIANT HEATERS

A radiant heater heats objects and people—not the air—in a room. They are best used in rooms where the person who wants to be warmed can be in direct line of sight of the heater. Radiant heaters can be a good choice if you are in a room for a short period of time and want instant heat. They can pose a burn or fire risk and should not be placed near furniture, drapery, pets, or small children.

CONVECTION HEATERS

Convection heaters are designed to heat the air—not people or objects—in a room. Hot air from the convection heater rises to the ceiling and forces cooler air to the floor. The cooler air is warmed by the heater and rises to the ceiling,

creating a cycle that continues as long as the heater is on. These are typically either baseboard heaters or oil- or water-filled heaters. The oil- or water-filled heaters are the most efficient and typically look like a small radiator. Convection heaters are generally warm to the touch and, compared to a radiant heater, have a decreased fire and burn risk.

COMBINATION HEATERS

As the name implies, a combination heater tries to bring the best of the radiant and convection heaters into one package. They often have an internal fan that aids in distributing heat throughout the room. These heaters are versatile and more common as a result, although they do not typically perform as well as a radiant or convection heater.

Before purchasing a space heater you should determine how and where it will be used, and whether a radiant, convection, or combination heater will do the job best. Combination units are versatile, but you will most likely get better performance from a radiant or convection heater. Use a radiant heater if you want heat instantly and will not move from one spot. If you need to warm an entire room, a convection heater

should do the trick.

Most space heaters use between 600 and 1,500 watts of electricity. If a homeowner were to use a space heater 8 hours a day, 5 days a week for a month it would cost approximately \$15.26. So can using a space heater cut your home heating bill? Maybe.

Space heaters can only heat a small space. You can save significant money if you use the space heater with this in mind: turn the thermostat of your central heating system down considerably (as low as 50 degrees in some cases). Place the space heater in a room that is occupied by people, and close that room off from the rest of the home. This method of “zone heating” will save money.

Space heaters do have their place in warming a house. But they simply cannot replace energy efficient central heating or weatherization improvements to the home. For example, all electric

Space heaters, cont. on Page 7

HOW TO CALCULATE THE COST OF RUNNING A PORTABLE ELECTRIC HEATER:

First convert watts to kilowatts:

$$\frac{\text{_____}}{\text{watts}} \div 1,000 = \frac{\text{_____}}{\text{kilowatts}}$$

Next calculate the operating cost:

$$\frac{\text{_____}}{\text{kilowatt}} \times \frac{\text{_____}}{\text{hours of operation}} \times \frac{\text{\$.105}}{\text{cost per kilowatt-hour}} = \frac{\text{_____}}{\text{cost of operation}}$$

A few solar units remain

TEC's community solar array, Renewable RaysSM has just 28 units remaining. Participation is limited to members of the cooperative. Renewable Rays consists of 180 units that are 410 watts each. Members taking part in the project purchase the energy output of the units, while TEC owns, operates, maintains and provides insurance for the duration of the program which is 20 years.

Beginning on September 1, 2014 the remaining units are discounted each month until the project is fully subscribed. This will allow all participants to be on the same 20 year time-frame. The original price per unit was \$1,400, for December it is now \$1,376.

For additional details visit www.tec.coop or contact Ted Kjos, TEC's vice president of marketing and external relations, by phone at 1-800-432-2285 or by email at tkjos@tec.coop.



Space heaters, cont. from Page 6

space heaters produce 1 unit of heat for every 1 unit of electricity consumed, meaning they are 100 percent energy efficient. Those that use natural gas are up to 95 percent efficient. In comparison, geothermal heat pumps can produce more than 3 units of heat for every unit of electricity consumed, making them 300 percent efficient.

As with any technology, before purchasing a space heater understand how the device is to be used, and understand the energy claims of the manufacturer. While it may be technically possible to cut your heating bill by 50 percent using a space heater, it is impractical for most people.



BOARD REPORT HIGHLIGHTS FROM JOINT MEETING WITH HAWKEYE REC HELD NOVEMBER 24, 2014

- Agreed to a shared Supervisor of Information Technology position with Hawkeye REC, Cresco, Iowa.
- Received an update on the cooperative's consolidation study between Hawkeye REC and TEC.

BOARD REPORT HIGHLIGHTS FROM NOVEMBER 25, 2014

- Approved a Power and Utility Cost Adjustment (PUCA) credit of .001¢ per kWh for the month of November.
- Reviewed the Rural Utilities Service 300 Form which is a review and evaluation of our electric system and facilities as related to system operations and maintenance.
- Adopted the Southern Minnesota Electric Cooperative (SMEC) Load Forecast Resolution 14-15.

A subsidiary of Tri-County Electric Cooperative



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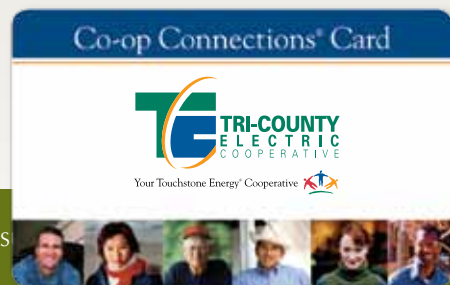


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Every quarter look for this print listing of businesses participating in the Co-op Connections Program. These discounts are available only to card holders. Because discounts can change, please visit www.connections.coop/tecmn to view

up-to-date information. Prior to making your purchase, please show the business your Co-op Connections card to ensure the discount is still valid.

Brownsville

Al's Small Engine

507.482.6867 | Brownsville, MN

Al's Small Engine provides sales and service of outdoor power equipment (lawnmowers, chain saws, snow blowers, etc.). Get a 5% discount on in-stock parts; \$20 off any new in-stock whole goods purchase over \$300.

Chatfield

Jackie's Health & Fitness Center

507.867.3744 | Chatfield, MN

It's time to put your health first. Jackie's Health & Fitness Center offers access to commercial grade aerobic and weight equipment to get you on the right track. Enjoy the use of a top grade free weights lifting area. Free personalized training comes with a membership. Join now and get two fitness centers (also includes Fillmore Fitness of Fountain) for one low price. Get 50 percent off the membership fee with your Co-op Connections card.

R Four Meats

507.867.4180 | Chatfield, MN

R Four Meats is a full-service USDA custom processing plant with a retail counter. Our plant custom processes for local farmers and buys from local farmers for the retail counter. Our natural wood-smoked products are handmade/homemade in our plant. In addition to supporting locally grown beef and pork, we process venison and participate in the Minnesota venison donation program. Retail counter discount: Get \$2 off when you spend \$30 or get \$5 off when you spend \$50. Processing discount: Farmers scheduling

(through co-op) an animal to be processed will receive \$3 off the slaughter fee. Ask us how you can be the Farmer of the Month in our fresh retail meat case.

Fountain

Barb's Carpet Care

507.268.4469 | Fountain, MN

Carpet cleaning using circular dry foam method. Receive 10% off carpet cleaning service.

Fillmore Fitness of Fountain

507.273.7733 | Fountain, MN

Take advantage of working out and getting fit in a climate controlled environment at Fillmore Fitness of Fountain. This local fitness center can give you access to commercial grade aerobic and weight equipment. Enjoy the use of a top grade free weights lifting area. Free personalized training comes with a membership. Join now and get two fitness centers (also includes Jackie's Health & Fitness Center) for one low price. Get 50 percent off the membership fee with your Co-op Connections card.

Harmony

Asahi Loft of Harmony

507.226.3735 | Harmony, MN

The tranquility of Japan, the craftsmanship of the local Amish, and the luxury of a resort spa. All these can be found at the Asahi Loft of Harmony. Receive a 20% discount on your stay.

Better Options

507.273.4451 | Harmony, MN

Better Options has chosen the best companies in their field with superior products and warranties to match. Whether you are building or remodeling a home or office, with the help of Better Options you will know what products are best for your project. Products include: GRANICRETE (countertops, showers, flooring), ENERCEPT structurally insulated panels (SIP), GERARD stone coated steel shingles, LAST DECK maintenance free decking, custom steel framing, LEAFGUARD gutters, HOME MAINTENANCE PROGRAM, GREEN ICE environmentally friendly ice melt, and VAST composite deck pavers, Back Yard Bar-B-Q/Smoker by ROYALL,

SEND OUT CARDS and HOME INSPECTIONS. Receive 3% off materials and labor when your project is completed by Scrabeck Construction.

Kingsley Mercantile, Inc.

507.886.2323 | Harmony, MN

Full hardware store. Appliance store. Small engine store. Appliance repair. Small engine repair. Receive \$25 off any Energy Star appliance purchase.

Slim's Woodshed & Museum

507.886.3114 | Harmony, MN

The largest wood carving museum in the U.S. houses over 4,000 carvings from around the world. The gift shop offers wood carvings, books, carving supplies and wood. The "Loft" offers antiques and flea market treasures. Weekly carving classes available in Slim's classroom. Receive 5% off any purchase. Discount excludes museum admission.

Houston

Money Creek Retreat

507.896.2367 | Houston, MN

Whether you are coming to relax, looking for a great place to hunt, or a romantic weekend, Money Creek Retreat is your place for cabin rentals and outfitting. We are located in the beautiful hills of southeastern Minnesota, in the little town of Money Creek. We have two new cabins to rent, each with their own theme, walking trails through the woods, a sand volleyball court, and of course 250 acres of some of the best private White Tail hunting in Minnesota! Stay two nights at Money Creek Retreat and get the third night FREE. Offer excludes hunting packages.

****NEW BUSINESS LISTING!****

Outer Edge

507.864.3699 | Houston, MN

Is your outdoor space not matching up with what you've been dreaming of? Outer Edge can take your vision and make your dream come true. Dedicated to mastering the art of landscaping, Outer Edge offers a host of services including installation of retaining walls, pavers, concrete, landscaping, grading, snow removal, outdoor lighting and tree pruning. Receive 15% off your bill with the Co-op Connections card.

Lanesboro

Avian Acres' Wild Bird Supply
507.467.2996 | Lanesboro, MN

Avian Acres is well known for an outstanding selection of quality birding products, including the freshest seed and custom mixes. Whether it's the choicest food options, the top-of-the-line squirrel proof feeder, or effective attraction techniques, Avian Acres strives to maintain that same basic approach with all we do. Receive 20 lbs. of any fresh custom seed mix (like our best selling Bob's Mix) for the price of 15 lbs.

Bluffscape Amish Tours
507.467.3070 | Lanesboro, MN

Visit Amish farms and shops on our three-hour tours in our van or mini-bus. Experience the interesting history of these Christian people as you step back in time. Browse and purchase Amish crafts, furniture, leather items and baked goods. Also, a non-Amish stop may include the historical Lenora Stone Church built in 1856. Receive a 10% discount on Amish tours from April-October.

Commonweal Theatre Company
800.657.7025 | Lanesboro, MN

The Commonweal Theatre provides a live professional theatre experience. The Commonweal Theatre is located in the historic town of Lanesboro in the heart of southeastern Minnesota's beautiful bluff country. Receive \$5 off the regular ticket price. May not be used with any other discount offer.

Huntington Electric
507.467.2348 | Lanesboro, MN

Electrical contractor. \$25 off any service over \$100.

R & M Amish Tours
507.467.2128 | Lanesboro, MN

As you take a step back in time you will visit a variety of Amish farms. Your guide will describe Amish society as you visit each farm and talk to the families. Receive a free 2 hour hybrid bike rental at the Little River General Store with a purchase of a tour ticket from R & M Amish Tours.

Stone Mill Hotel & Suites
507.467.8663 | Lanesboro, MN

Stone Mill Hotel & Suites at the lovingly restored Lanesboro FEED MILL offers a variety of premier accommodations that are relaxing, comfortable and amenity-rich. All accommodation choices are peaceful, convenient and truly offer a unique lodging experience. Receive a FREE inn tour. Also, 10% off your room rate for stays Sundays - Thursdays year round and during off-peak weekends (November - the weekend before Memorial Day).

Rushford

Abundant Life Fitness & Massage LLC
507.864.5433 | Rushford, MN

Massage therapies, infrared saunas, tanning beds, fitness center with cardio, strength and circuit training are available. Receive \$5 off any massage, sauna or tanning packages or fitness training fees.

Capture It In Steel
507.208.5759 | Rushford, MN

Unique, quality steel products, custom made just for YOU! Ideas are limitless with indoor and outdoor weather resistant steel products including decorative fire pit surrounds, custom frames, garden stakes and wall hangings. Receive 10% off any decorative metal art purchase.

Featherstone Farm
507.864.2400 | Rushford, MN

Featherstone Farm is a 360 acre organic vegetable farm located in Rushford Village, Minn. Owner Jack Hedin has been growing organic vegetables in the community since relocating here with his family in 1994. Featherstone Farm offers summer and winter community supported agriculture (CSA) shares to customers in Rushford, Winona, La Crosse, Rochester and the Twin Cities area. Mention your Co-op Connections card to receive \$15 off any CSA share. This is for NEW MEMBERS ONLY.

G.S. Woxland Co. Inc.
507.864.2245 | Rushford, MN

G.S. Woxland Co. has been serving Rushford and its surrounding area for more than 100 years. Their plumbing and heating business carries a time honored tradition of "Quality First, Service Always." Brands include: Lennox, Goodman, Econar and WaterFurnace. G.S. Woxland is offering the following discounts: \$50 off any Energy Star air conditioner with a SEER rating of 14 or above; \$100 off any Energy Star air-to-air heat pump with a SEER rating of 14 or above; and \$500 off any Econar or WaterFurnace ground-source heat pump.

Heartland Security
888.264.6380 | Rushford, MN

Heartland Security is owned by 14 electric cooperatives (including TEC) in central and southern Minnesota and northern Iowa. Heartland Security installs residential, commercial and agricultural alarm systems. The company also installs home medical monitoring systems. Receive 2 months free monitoring with the purchase of a base security system. TEC members can take advantage of this offer in addition to other Heartland Security promotions.

Reliable Pest Management LLC
877.864.8115 | Rushford, MN

Choose us for your general pest and wildlife control. First-time customers can receive 5% off services. If you are already an existing "preferred" customer, receive a 3% discount.

Ross Himlie Photography
507.864.2484 | Rushford, MN

Whatever the occasion, you can expect more from Ross Himlie Photography. More options, more great pictures and more memories to treasure in years to come. Receive a \$25 credit with your order of \$200 or more.

Rushford Chiropractic Clinic
507.864.8888 | Rushford, MN

With over 20 years of experience in treating patients from newborn to over 100 years young, Dr. David Hinz is trained to know what problems can be treated with therapy and chiropractic adjustments and what clinic presentations need to be referred to another health care practitioner. Come in for a chiropractic treatment at Rushford Chiropractic Clinic and receive a FREE 10 minute hydrotherapy massage table session. Offer must be redeemed the same day following your chiropractic treatment.

Southeast Minnesota Bluegrass Association
507.864.8109 | Rushford, MN

SEMBA has been formed in order to promote traditional country and bluegrass music in the area. It promotes two bluegrass festivals in the area, six school programs, a jam camp and jam sessions. Receive \$1 off admission.

Stewartville
First Farmers & Merchants Bank
507.533.4081 | Stewartville, MN

First Farmers & Merchants Bank is a financial services institution. Open a new checking or savings account with First Farmers & Merchants Bank and we'll offer you one of the following: a \$10 deposit into your account, one-year of FREE Bill Pay or a FREE debit card.

Winona
Blong's Tree Service
507.454.5311 | Winona, MN

With 58 years of experience, Blong's Tree Service is qualified to handle just about any project: tree removal, stump removal, excavating, contracting work, landscaping and construction dozer work. Receive 10% off the estimate price.

****NEW DISCOUNT!****
Bob's Home Heating & Cooling
507.454.3814 | Winona, MN

The scientific geo-geniuses behind ClimateMaster have just released a brand new, hyper-efficient MODULATING Geothermal System—Trilogy Q. Not only does it give you operational savings higher than every other geothermal system on the market today, it also covers 100% of your domestic hot water needs as well! Bob's Home Heating and Cooling is trained and certified to install this state of the art equipment using the best installation practices available to date. Call us now for a free evaluation and a \$300 credit towards the installation or upgrade to the Trilogy Q!

Wykoff
Erdman & Associates
507.352.5121 | Wykoff, MN

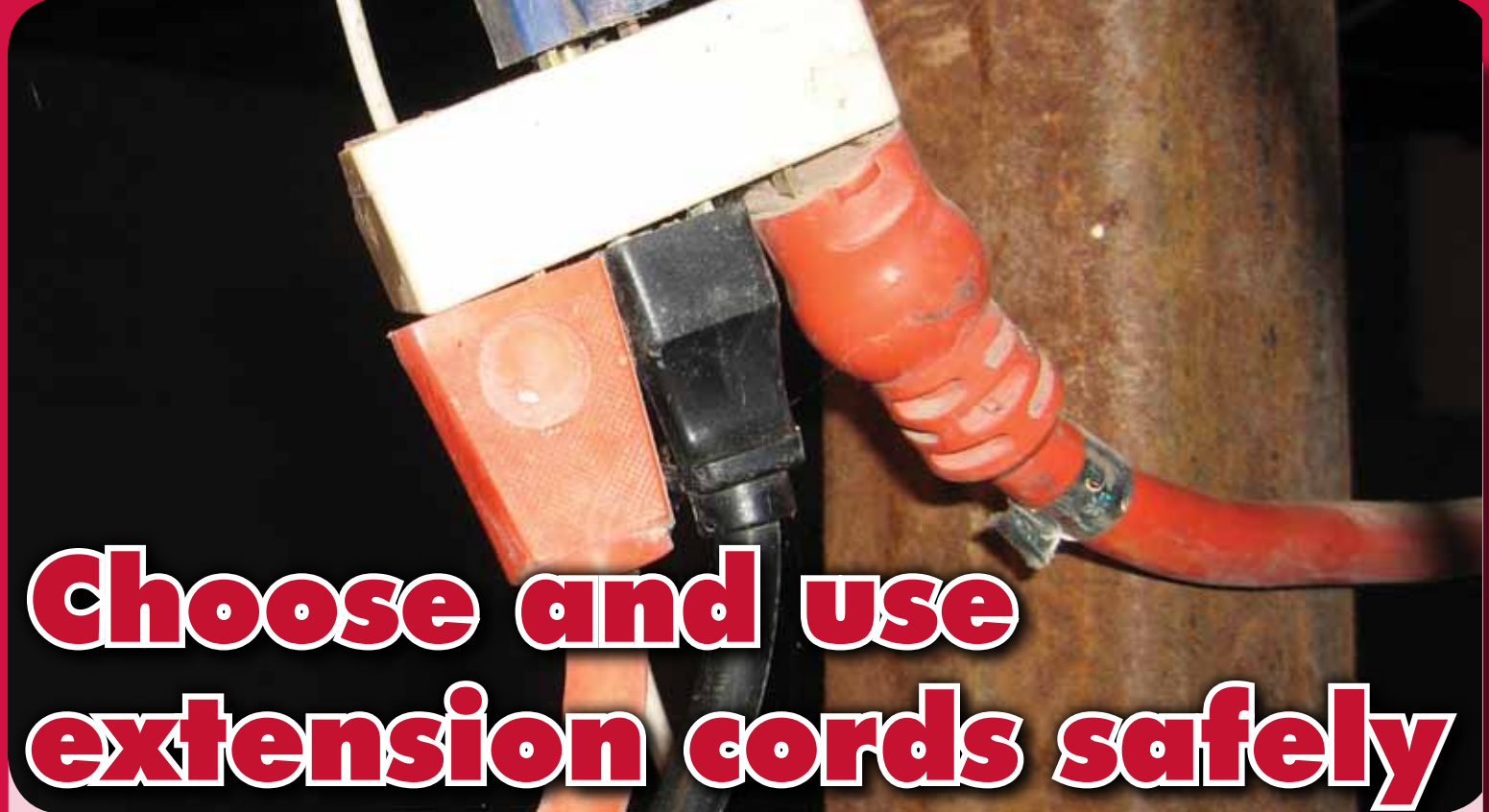
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Choose and use extension cords safely

Many people have tried to use an electronic device only to find out the cord is too short to reach the outlet. This is where extension cords come into play. They are useful for their practical, cost effective solutions to these problems, but remember to choose and use extension cords safely.

“Extension cords are designed for temporary use,” explains Mark Zweibohmer, TEC’s compliance and training coordinator. “They should never be put in place as a long-term solution. A qualified electrician can help you install the necessary wiring and receptacle outlets for a permanent solution.”

If you go shopping for extension cords, you will find a variety of options available. However, research the extension cord you are buying to ensure it fits your needs. First, look for key safety labels that show that the product has been tested for safety. Underwriters Laboratory (UL), Intertek (ETL) and Canadian Standards Association (CSA) are common safety laboratory seals of approval to look for.

It is important to choose an extension cord that is properly rated for the device(s) you will have plugged into it. If an appliance or power tool is drawing more current than an extension cord can carry, it may cause the cord and tool to overheat and create a fire. Check the packaging on the cord for its rating, size, wattage and check the appliance or its user manual for its power use.

Additionally, it is important to consider the environment in which you will be using the extension cord: indoors or outdoors. Extension cords in stores will be clearly labeled “indoor,” “outdoor,” or “indoor/outdoor.” Extension cords designed for outdoor use have thicker, more durable jacket covers, which is the rubber insulating the cord’s wiring.

OUTDOOR & INDOOR EXTENSION CORD TIPS:

- Occasionally check the condition of extension cords. Look for fraying or cracking along the entire length of the cord and for damage to the plug or sockets. Cords used outdoors should be checked more frequently because of the constant wear and tear.

Cracked insulation or exposed wire can cause electric shock, burn, or electrical fire. Replace any damaged cords.

- Never remove the grounding pin (or third prong) from an extension cord to make it fit into a two-prong outlet. This is a safety feature designed to protect. Instead of removing the third prong, hire a qualified electrician to install a new outlet.
- Do not overload extension cords with too many electronics or power tools. It may cause the cord to overheat and start a fire. If you are going to use the extension cord with two or more appliances, you must add together the wattage rating for all appliances used on the cord to make sure the cord will not become overloaded.

- Extension cords always conduct electricity when plugged into an outlet, even if it is not being used. Therefore, always unplug the cord when you are finished with it.

INDOOR EXTENSION CORD TIPS:

- Be sure the cord is rated for indoor use.
- If any part of the extension cord becomes hot while in use, unplug it immediately and discard it.
- Keep extension cords away from children, pets and high-traffic areas.
- Do not place extension cords under carpets, rugs, furniture or cover with any other objects.

OUTDOOR EXTENSION CORD TIPS:

- Use durable cords rated for outdoor use.
- Be sure to provide some slack in order to prevent tension on the cord. Tension on any part of the cord can cause damage.
- Do not use cords in wet conditions. Water conducts electricity, and working in wet conditions increases the chance of shock or electrocution.
- When not in use, store extension cords indoors, in a dry area and steady temperature climate. Storing extension cords outdoors will deteriorate the cord.

HOW DOES THE LOAD MANAGEMENT PROGRAM WORK?

Dairyland estimates the load management program reduces its system peak by approximately 70 megawatts (MW) in the summer and 140 MW in the winter—the equivalent size of a small power plant. It has done so by reducing total demand during peak use hours when people are commonly at home running washers, dryers, dishwashers, air conditioners, heaters and so on.

For example, your air conditioning unit might be cycled on and off at 15 minute intervals for a few hours on a day load management was utilized, if you are a program participant. Home comfort is not diminished, but the energy and financial savings aggregated through participation across the Dairyland membership is significant.

See where power outages are 24/7

TEC's power outage map is a great tool for those interested in seeing where electricity is out. While the map doesn't pinpoint the exact location of power outages, members have indicated they like knowing if others in their area are without electricity.

To view the map, visit www.tec.coop and hover over the *Outages* tab. From there you have two options for viewing the map: select *view on PC* or *view on mobile device*.

If you hover or click on the substation area it will display the number of power outages.



HOT DAYS, COLD DAYS AND ALL THE DAYS IN BETWEEN.

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Light Conversation is the official member publication of Tri-County Electric Cooperative and focuses on our members, programs and events. All story ideas and comments are welcome.

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